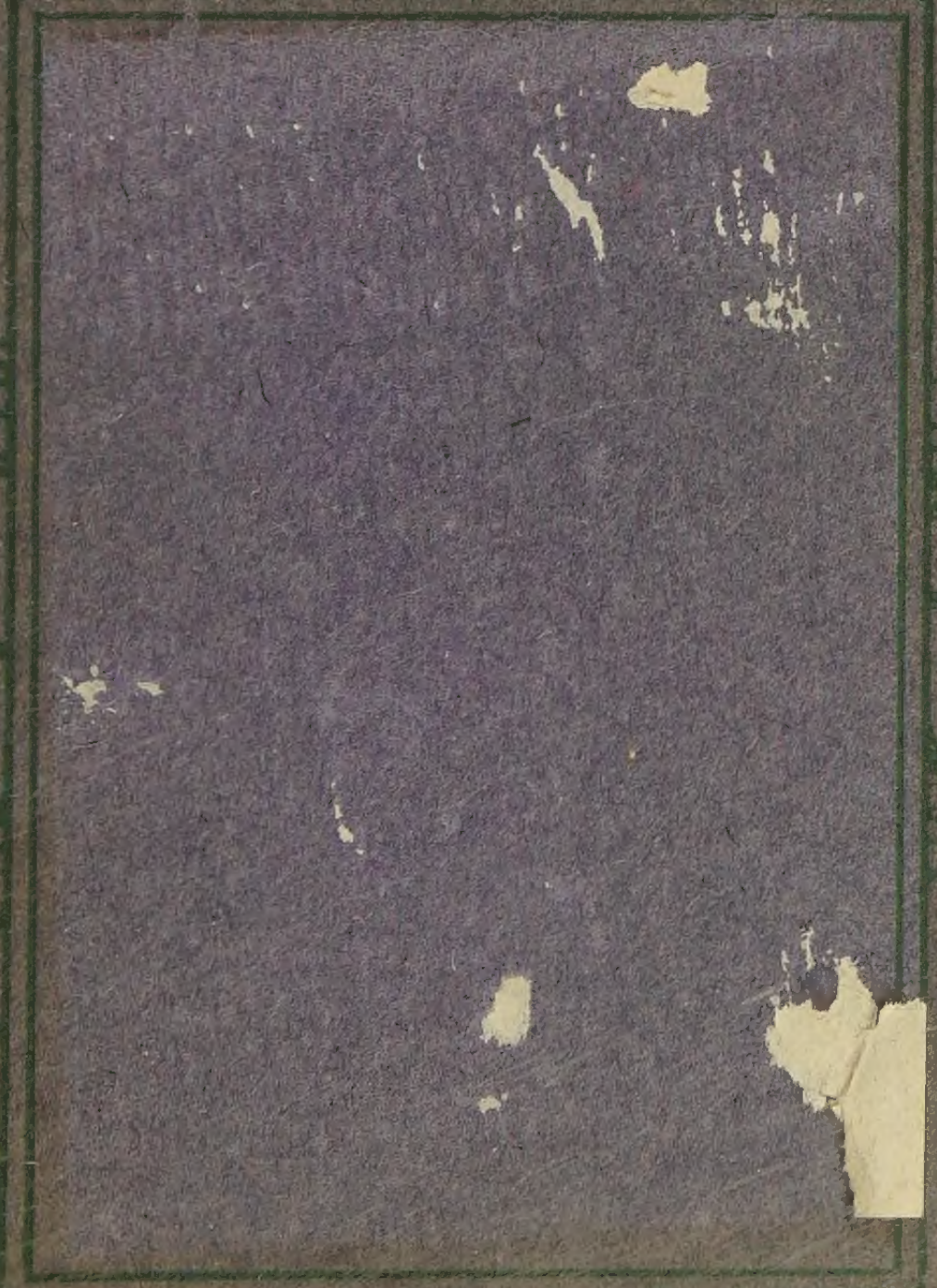
WEE FOLKS STORIES FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT IN WORDS OF ONE SYLLABLE



Bobby Hammer

from

Mother

Christmas 1927

Frontispiece

WEE FOLKS STORIES

FROM

THE OLD TESTAMENT

IN

WORDS OF ONE SYLLABLE

BY

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PHILADELPHIA

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WEE FOLKS STORIES
FROM THE
OLD TESTAMENT

THE WORLD IS MADE

God made the world in which we live full of joys for us: The green grass that grows in the spring; the pink buds that peep out when the sun shines and the air is warm; the bright red leaves that come when the green ones change, and then fall to the ground when the trees go to sleep late in the year; the clear ice and the clean, white snow that lies on all the north-lands when the air is cold and the frost is here.

Once there were none of these things to be seen. The earth was dark and still. Then God made the sun to shine in the day and the moon and the stars to give light at night. Rain and dew fell and plants grew to give us food, and fruit formed, ripe and sweet, for us to eat.

Birds came to sing and make nests in the trees. Sheep and cows, with their lambs and calves, strayed in the fields and fed on the grass. Beasts roamed in the wilds. Fish swam in the sea and the streams. Bees hummed in the soft air. Ants dug their cells in the rich earth. All things that move, that can run, or fly, or swim, were full of the joy of life.

The deep blue sky, with its soft white clouds, like a lamb's fleece of

wool, looked down on the green earth. The sun-light danced on the lakes and ponds. At night the moon, or the stars, shone on each still place where all slept and none felt fear, for all were safe.

There was no one to see and use all these good things, so God made a man and put him in the midst of them. He called him Ad'am. That he might have a help-meet for him, some one to share them with, God gave him a wife, whose name was Eve, to be with him.

MAN SINS

In the place where God had put Ad′am and Eve there was one tree whose fruit God told them not to touch, for if they ate it they would die. Eve did not know what death meant, no one had died yet, so she did not fear it as much as she would have done if she had seen death. The fruit was ripe and full of juice, and she longed to taste it.

One day a bad spir-it, in the shape of a snake, told Eve that she might eat it if she cared to, for it was not true that she would die. Eve took it and gave some to Ad′am, who ate it too.

God was grieved that when He had made all these good things for them and

done so much for them, they would not do the one small thing He had asked them to do. He could not leave them in the fair place where He had put them at first, as He could not trust them now. He sent them out in a land where things did not grow of themselves, and they had to work to get food to eat.

They had no clothes and Eve joined fig leaves and sewed them to make a kind of dress for them. By and by God gave them coats made of the skins of beasts to keep them warm.

They could not go back; God had placed an an-gel at the gate, with a bright sword, to keep them out. They had to stay where they were. The glad days were gone when they could get what they liked with-out hard work.

CAIN AND A′BEL

In time Ad′am and Eve had two sons, named Cain and A′bel, and when some years had passed a third son called Seth. A′bel took care of flocks of sheep. Cain worked on the land and made things grow, as they do on farms.

One day A′bel brought a lamb of his flock to give it to God. Cain brought some of the things that he had raised, grain, or fruit, to give Him too. God saw that A′bel's heart was full of love for Him, and that he gave the best he had to show it. Cain brought his things with-out love; he thought he had to give them, but it was not love that moved him to do it. God took

A′bel's gift and blessed him. He would not take Cain's gift—there was no love to make it sweet to Him.

Cain was filled with rage when he found God would not have what he had brought; his face grew dark and cross. He did not blame his own want of love. He blamed A′bel. Hard words led to blows; Cain struck A′bel and he died.

God told Cain that as he had killed A′bel a mark would be put on his face so that all would know he had killed a man, but they must not kill him. When he worked hard to make things grow out of the ground it would not yield large crops, as it used to do for him. Then, too, God told him he should have no home on earth.

Cain must have wished he had not

let his rage make him kill A'bel, now it was too late.

THE ARK

Long years had passed since Cain's death. Men had ceased to love God, or to want to please Him, and so had grown bad. God said He would send a great flood and drown all but a few in the world. He meant to save these so the whole race would not die out. To do this He told a man named No'ah to build an ark that would float, a kind of large ship. In it were to be put two of all things that had life, to keep them safe from the flood. No'ah did as God told him and built the ark and filled it. He took his wife in it with him, and

his three sons and their wives. For four times ten days and nights the rain fell. Can you tell how long that was? All that breathed the breath of life out-side of the ark were drowned. The flood kept up for five months. Then No'ah sent out a dove to see if she could find dry land. When she came back with a leaf in her mouth No'ah knew she must have picked it off a tree. The next time No'ah sent her out she did not come back; she had found a dry place where she could stay. So No'ah and all that were in the ark with him went out.

God told No'ah that He would set His bow in the cloud, so that when it rained hard and he feared a flood might come No'ah would see the bright bow and know he need not fear. We see

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the bow still some-times when it rains, and we call it the rain-bow.

THE TWO BOYS

No′ah's first son was named Shem. To one of his seed, when a great while had passed, A′bra-ham was born. When he grew up he was such a good man he was called the Friend of God.

His wife's name was Sa′rah. She was most fair to see and all loved to look at her, but she had no child. This was a great grief to her and she prayed God that He would send her a son. When she was quite old God gave her the wish of her heart and sent her a son. His name was I′saac, which

means a laugh. God said He would do great things for him.

The day he was weaned, A′bra-ham gave a great feast. He had, too, a son Ish′ma-el, a name that means God will hear. On the day of the feast this boy made fun of Sa′rah and her child and mocked and jeered at them. Sa′rah was so vexed she said that he and his moth-er, Ha′gar, must be sent off. She would not let them live near her and her son. So A′bra-ham sent them off; but he gave Ha′gar bread and something to drink that she and her boy might not starve. They strayed in-to a wild place, where there was no food and where no one lived to help them. Ha′gar feared they would starve to death and she hid her face so she should not see her boy die. God sent

one of His an-gels to help her and show her where she could find a drink for her-self and her son. God took care of them until Ish′ma-el was a man.

I′SAAC'S WIFE

When I′saac grew up A′bra-ham did not want him to choose a wife from the girls in the land where he lived. They did not know the true God. So he told one of his men to go to the land he had come from and bring a wife from there for his son.

The man said the girl might not want to come back with him. A′bra-ham was sure God would put it in the heart of the right girl to come, and so it turned out.

The man who went had ten cam-els to bear his goods, for he took a load of gifts for the girl who would be I′saac's wife. It was near the end of the day when he came to a town. Out-side it was a well where the girls from the town came at this time of day. He made his great beasts kneel down so they could drink. Then he asked God to give him a sign to show him which girl would be the best wife for the young man. When he said to one of them, "Let down thy cup that I may drink," if she said, "Drink and I will give thy cam-els drink too," he would know that she was the one God chose to go home with him.

Re-bek′ah was the name of the fair girl who said to him, "Drink, my lord," when he asked her, and she

helped the cam-els too. He found that she was one of A′bra-ham's own kin, and she went back with him to be I′saac's much-loved wife.

THE TWIN SONS

I′saac and Re-bek′ah had twin sons, E′sau and Ja′cob. One day E′sau came in from the field faint for want of food. Ja′cob had made a dish of a kind of red beans that smelled good to E′sau and he longed to taste it. Ja′cob said if E′sau would give up to him all his rights as the first-born son he might have the food to eat. E′sau thought he might as well give them up as to wait until he could get food he might not like as well, so he swore that he

would do so. God had made him the first-born, but E′sau did not care for this, nor think much of his birth-right.

Years passed, I′saac was an old man, soon to die, and he was blind. He meant to bless his first-born son. Re-bek′ah wished him to bless Ja′cob, that he might be a great man on earth. I′saac would not slight E′sau and she did not see how she could have her way.

I′saac called E′sau to him one day and told him when he went to hunt to bring in some wild goat meat and cook it for him, that he might eat it and bless him. Re-bek′ah heard this and told Ja′cob to kill two good kids of their flock of goats and she would dress them so I′saac would like them and would not want the meat when E′sau brought it. She put the skin of the

kids on Ja′cob's smooth neck and hands, so I′saac would not know him, for E′sau's neck and hands had hair on them, and dressed him in E′sau's clothes.

Ja′cob took bread and the kid's flesh to I′saac and when he felt him he said, "The hands are the hands of E′sau, but the voice is the voice of Ja′cob," and thought he was E′sau, the first-born, and so he blessed him.

When E′sau came home and found he was too late, he gave a great cry and wept salt tears and said he would kill Ja′cob. He did not think of the day that he sold his birth-right and that it was his own fault.

Ja′cob did not want to do this wrong thing, but Re-bek′ah forced him to do it. Do you think he tried as hard as he might have done to do right?

THE BAD BROTH-ERS

Ja′cob had two wives, Le′ah and Ra′chel. The first one had ten sons; the sec-ond two sons, Jo′seph and Ben′ja-min, and these were the two that Ja′cob loved best.

The sons of the first wife were not kind to the two young boys. They thought Ja′cob loved Jo′seph too much; he made him a coat of bright stripes, and called him the son of his old age.

One day Ja′cob sent him to see the ten who had gone to feed their flock of sheep in a far place. When they saw him they said, "Come now, let us kill him and cast him in some pit and we will say some fierce beast ate him

up." One of them, named Reu'ben, said, "Let us not kill him but throw him in the pit." He meant to come back and get him out when they were gone.

They took off Jo'seph's bright coat and cast him in the pit. Some men passed that way, and drew him out and sold him to a band of Ish'ma-el-ites, who took him with them to E'gypt.

When Reu'ben came back to save him he was gone. Then they dipped his coat in the blood of a kid and took it home to Ja'cob. They told him a wild beast had killed his boy.

When he saw the coat stained with blood poor Ja'cob said, "With-out doubt Jo'seph is dead." He mourned and wept for his son a long time. He loved him so much he said his grief

would last until he went down to his own grave.

All the while Jo′seph was safe in E′gypt.

JO′SEPH IN E′GYPT

In the course of years Jo′seph rose to be a great man in E′gypt. At first he was sold as a slave, but the man who bought him was kind to him. He was so good and worked so hard that God blessed him, and all he did turned out well. He grew rich, for he was well paid and had full charge of all that was in the house and in the fields of the man who owned him, who was one of the king's guards.

As time passed the wife of this man

did not treat Jo'seph well; she said what was not true of him. The man of course thought his wife spoke the truth and he put Jo'seph in jail, but God was still with him.

In the jail were two men who had served the king. One had baked the bread for his house, the other used to wait on the king when he was at meals. Each of these men dreamed a dream, and Jo'seph told them what the dreams meant. The first man was to be hanged, the second was to be set free to wait on the king once more.

When the king heard what Jo'seph had said he thought he should like to see him and hear what his own dreams meant. When two years had passed he sent for him.

He was so pleased with Jo'seph's

words and to find him such a wise and good man, that he said he should rule the whole land of E′gypt. He took off his own ring and put it on Jo′seph's hand and put a gold chain on his neck.

THE FAM-INE

There was sore want in all these lands. The crops failed and there was no grain to grind into flour to make bread.

Jo′seph knew this time of need would come, for God had told him, so he bought food and stored it to have it to sell when there was none else to be had. A part of all the food that was grown in the good years was saved in this way.

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When the years of dearth came all cried to the king for bread. He said, "Go to Jo′seph, what he saith to you, do." Jo′seph took the grain out of his stores and sold it to those who came.

Men came from far lands to buy corn, for they too had no food. When Ja′cob heard that there was corn in E′gypt he said to his sons, "Get you down there and buy for us, that we may live and not die." So they went down to buy bread.

These were the men who had thrown Jo′seph in the pit, and thought him dead. They did not know that, except the king, none was so great in all the land of E′gypt as the boy they had tried to kill. They were told they would have to see Jo′seph, as no food could be sold

with-out his leave. They went and stood in front of him and bowed low, each with his face to the earth. Jo′-seph knew them at once, though they did not know him. He longed to hear if Ja′cob still lived and if Ben′ja-min had grown up, so he asked them these things and much else.

JO′SEPH'S PLAN

At last Jo′seph thought of a plan to see Ben′ja-min.

He said to the men, "Ye are spies, ye have come to see how bare the land is."

They said, "We are no spies, my lord, we are true men."

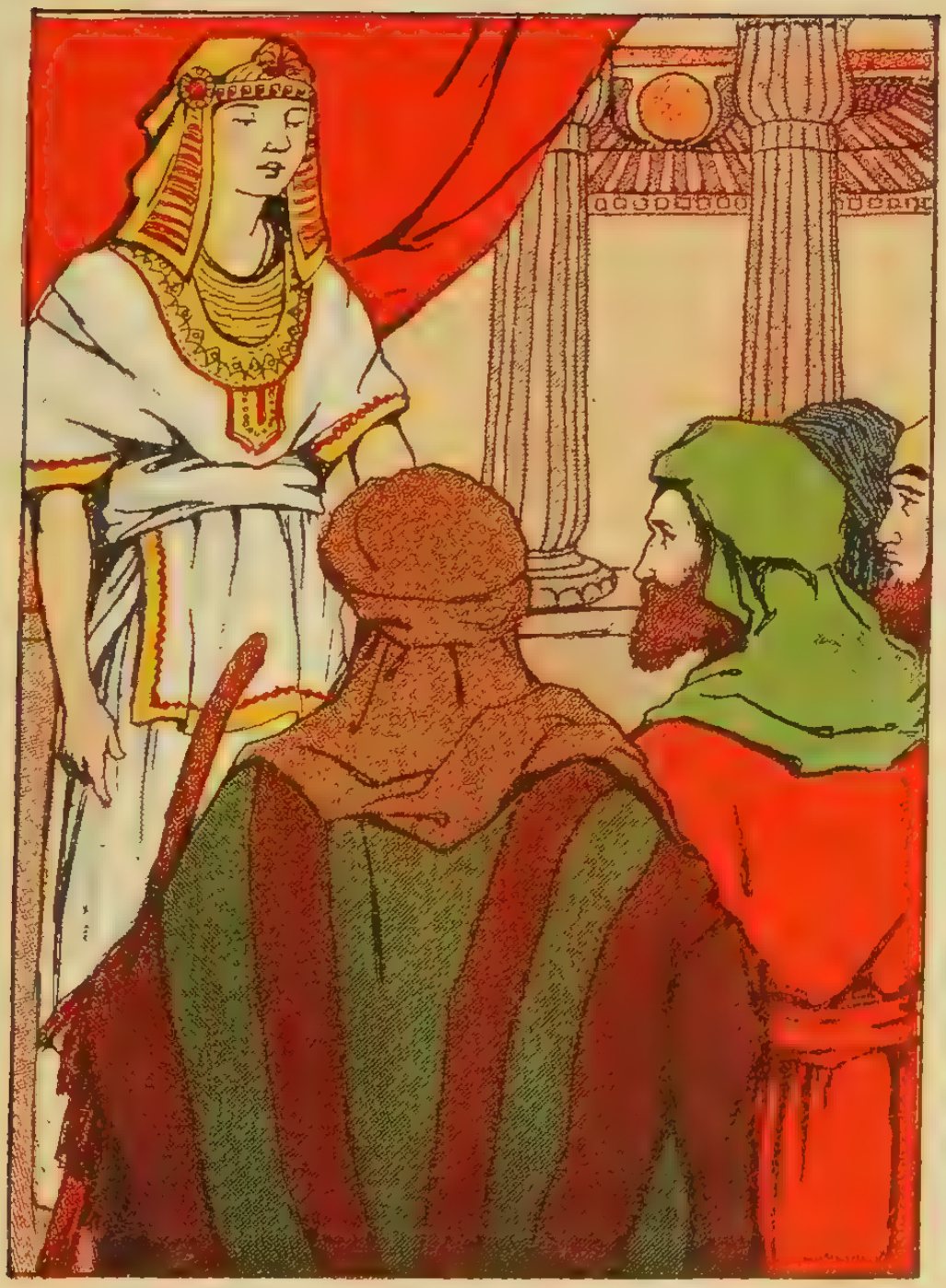
Jo′seph said, "If you are true men you must stay here and one of you

shall go and bring Ben′ja-min for me to see."

They did not want to do this, so Jo′seph put them all in jail. In three days they thought it best to go. Sim′e-on stayed bound in jail.

Jo′seph had their sacks filled with corn, the price they had brought to pay for it was put in the mouth of each sack as it was laid on the back of the ass, and they set off.

When they got home they said to Ja′cob, "The man who is the lord of the land was rough with us and took us for spies. We told him who we were and of you and Ben′ja-min. He said we must come back and bring Ben′ja-min to him." Ja′cob did not want to let him go, but Reu′ben, who had tried to save Jo′seph when he was a lad, said



he would take good care of him and bring him back safe and Sim′e-on too. At last Ja′cob said he might go.

When Jo′seph saw Ben′ja-min he sent out all who were in the room but the men who brought him, and told them who he was, and cried for joy. Then he said Ja′cob and all his sons must come and live in E′gypt, where he could take care of them; which they did.

THE BA-BY BY THE NILE

The king gave Ja′cob the land of Go′shen to live in. Once God gave Ja′cob a new name, Is′ra-el, which means a prince of God, so all who lived in this land were called the Children of Is′ra-el.

In time the king died and a new king reigned who knew not Jo′seph. The E-gyp′tians feared the Is′ra-el-ites, they grew so strong and great; so they fought them and made them slaves.

Like most slaves, they were ill used and made to do all the hard work. To keep them few the E-gyp′tians said that each boy born to them should be killed, so there would be no more men. You can think how sad this made the poor Is′ra-el-ites.

A son was born to a man of the tribe of Le′vi. He was such a fine child they hid him for three months. When they could hide him no more they made a small ark of a kind of stout grass that grows in a wet place and spread pitch on it to keep out the damp. In this they put the child, well

wrapped up, and placed it on the bank of the Nile. His sis-ter, Mir′i-am, stayed near to see what the end would be.

The king's daugh-ter walked by the Nile that day and saw the ark in the weeds and sent her maid to fetch it. When she saw the sweet child she loved him and longed to save him. Mir′i-am came near and said, "Shall I get some one to nurse him for you?"

The king's daugh-ter said, "Yes," and Mir′i-am brought Joch′e-bed, the child's own moth-er, to take care of him.

THE TEN PLAGUES

The king's daugh-ter called the boy Mo′ses, which means drawn out; he was to her as her own son. He grew up to be a wise and great man.

One day God told Mo′ses that He meant to send the Chil-dren of Is′ra-el out of E′gypt, back to their own land, and that he was to lead them.

The king, whose name was Pha′raoh, said they were his slaves and he would not let them go. God said He would do such things in E′gypt that the king would have to let them go, in fact, he would be glad to send them out. Pha′raoh laughed; he did not think God could do this.

Then God sent ten plagues on the land. First Mo'ses stretched out his rod on the Nile and it and all the streams and wells turned to blood. The fish died and no one could drink. Next a vast horde of frogs swarmed on the land. Third, Mo'ses smote the dust and it turned in-to lice that crawled on all things. Then each house was filled with swarms of flies that buzzed in the hot air. Fifth, the herds died, cows and calves, sheep and lambs, the bull, the horse and the ass lay down and rose no more. Sixth, Mo'ses filled his hands with ash-es, shook it out and it brought boils out on man and beast. Next, hail fell and spoiled all the crops. Eighth, lo-custs came and ate all the green things; they were so thick no one could see the ground. Ninth, it was

dark in all the land for three days, none could move from his place; but the Chil-dren of Is′ra-el had light where they lived. The tenth plague was far the worst of all. God sent his an-gel to smite the first born of all the E-gyp′tians, from the king down, both of man and beast.

When the night passed there was not a home where there was not one dead.

Then Pha′raoh said, "Rise up, get you forth and go serve the Lord as ye have said." The E-gyp′tians too urged them to make haste. They said, "We be all dead men." The Chil-dren of Is′ra-el went, with all they had, and much more that the men gave them to get rid of them. They were free.

THE RED SEA

God led the Chil-dren of Is′ra-el through a land of rocks and sand, where there was no food. A cloud went in front of them by day and a bright light like fire at night to show them the way. At last they came to the Red Sea and camped on the shore.

Pha′raoh said, "Those slaves of mine are lost in that wild land; I will go out and get them and bring them back." When the Chil-dren of Is′ra-el saw the E-gyp′tians sore fear came on them. But Mo′ses said, "Fear ye not; stand still and see what God will show you this day. The E-gyp′tians ye have seen this day ye shall see no more. The

Lord shall fight for you and you shall hold your peace."

Then God told Mo'ses to lift up his rod and stretch out his hand on the sea and the waves would part, some to his right hand and some to his left, and stand like a wall on each side, and leave a dry path. Mo'ses did so. The Children of Is'ra-el walked through on dry land.

The E-gyp'tians rushed on, but a strong east wind drove the waves back and drowned them all.

In spite of what God had done for Is'ra-el they grieved Him by their sins. He could not take them at once to the good land He meant to give them. They were not fit to live there.

Long years had passed, Mo'ses and most of those who left E'gypt with him

were dead, when at last God led them to it.

SAM′U-EL

The Chil-dren of Is′ra-el grew rich and great in the land of Ca′naan, which God gave them in His own good time.

Years passed, a great tem-ple had been built where men could pray and sing praise to God. One day E′li, who was the priest in charge and served God day and night there, saw the wife of a man who had come with him a long way to pray to the Lord of Hosts.

As she knelt in prayer tears rolled down her cheeks and she was sad. She had no child and she longed for one of her own; so she vowed to God that if

He would give her a son she would send him to live in the tem-ple and give him up to work for God. E'li was near and heard her pray. He said, "Go in peace, the God of Is'ra-el grant thee what thou hast asked of Him."

When her son came she called him Sam'u-el, which means asked of God. She took him with her when she went to pray and told E'li that as long as he lived he should be lent to the Lord, Who gave him to her.

In time he went to live with E'li to serve God. Each year Han'nah, Sam'-u-el's moth-er, made a small coat to fit him and brought it to him. She had three more boys and two girls now.

One night when the child Sam'u-el slept he was roused by a voice that called his name. He thought E'li spoke,

but it was not he. When next he heard it E′li told him it was the voice of God and the third time to say, "Speak, Lord; for Thy child hears."

Sam′u-el did so; God said to tell E′li his sons were not good men and could not be His priests, as E′li had hoped. He had to tell E′li this sad news. Poor E′li said, "It is the Lord; let Him do what seems good to Him." He knew his sons were not fit to be priests of God.

Sam′u-el lived to be chief in Is′ra-el and judged all the tribes for years. At last they asked for a king; God told him to choose Saul, the son of Kish, a fine young man, to rule them. Sam′u-el poured oil on Saul's head and blessed him and made him king.

THE SHEP-HERD KING

Saul did not prove a wise or good king. At last God told Sam′u-el to choose some one else to be king in Saul's stead. The choice fell on a lad named Da′vid, who all his life had cared for a flock of sheep. He had red cheeks, a bright face, and was good to look at. God knew he was brave and true and would make a good king.

Saul sent for him to come to his court and loved him when he saw him. He did not know that Da′vid was one day to be king in his place. Saul had dark, sad thoughts and dwelt too much on them in his mind. When he heard mu-sic it eased his deep gloom, so he

liked Da'vid to play on the harp and sing to him.

The Is'ra-el-ites were at war. One of the host that fought them was a huge man, named Go-li'ath. He was more than ten feet tall. He wore a cap of brass, a coat of mail, brass greaves on his legs and a large shield of brass at his back. In his hand he car-ried a great spear, like the beam of a loom, and a man walked before him with a huge shield.

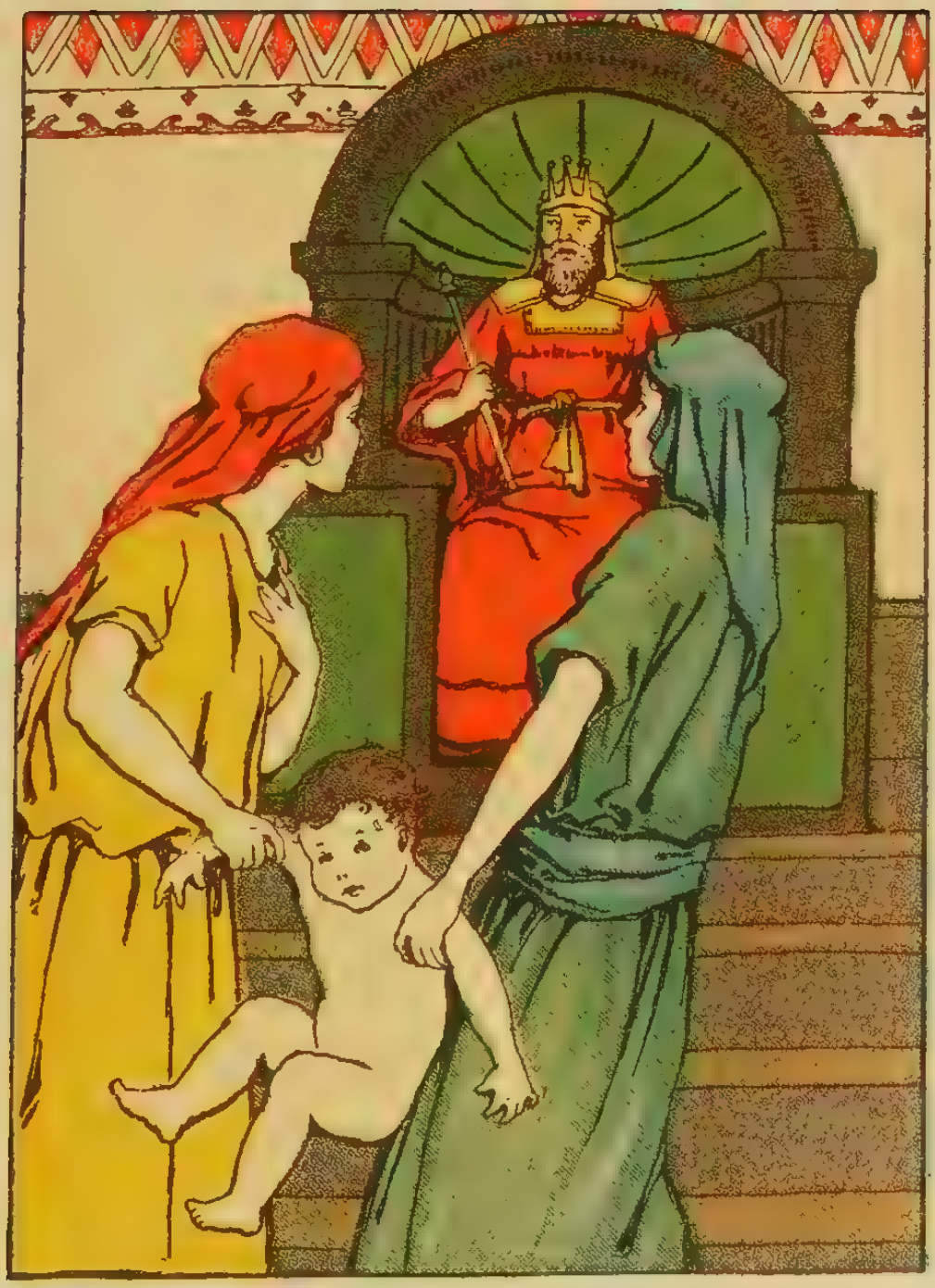
Da'vid begged Saul to let him try to kill him; he knew God would help him. He took five smooth stones out of the brook and put them in a bag and took his sling in his hand. The huge man jeered at him. Da'vid put a stone in the sling and threw it at him. It struck Go-li'ath near his eyes and he fell dead.

SOL′O-MON

Da′vid had to fight for his throne and he did not sit on it in peace till Saul was dead. He was much loved by all Is′ra-el and lived to be an old, old man. When he was gone his son, Sol′o-mon, reigned in his stead.

God gave Sol′o-mon great wealth and a wise mind, so that he judged Is′ra-el as well as ruled it.

One day two wom-en brought a child to his court; each claimed it as her own. Sol′o-mon knew they could not both own it, so he said, "Bring a sword and cut the child in two and give half to each." One of them cried out, "Oh, my lord, give her the child; in no wise



slay it." The next said, "Let it not be mine nor thine, but kill it." Then Sol'o-mon knew that the first was the moth-er and he gave the child to her.

There was peace in all the land and Sol'o-mon said he meant to build a great house to the name of the Lord, so that God might be praised there by all Is'rā-el. It was built of stone, cut and shaped first, so that no sound of axe or tool was heard when it was built. There was much carved wood used, of great cost, and on a large part of it were laid sheets of pure gold. When it was done there was no house as grand in all the world.

Sol'o-mon reigned long. At last he died and was laid in his grave, which was near Da'vid's.

NA′A-MAN

The men of Syr′i-a were at war with the Is′ra-el-ites. They had made a raid in their land and brought back a young maid. She lived in the house of Na′a-man, a great man in the host of the king of Syr′i-a, but he was a sick man. The maid said to Na′a-man's wife she was sure that if Na′a-man would go to E-li′sha, a man of God in Is′ra-el, he could heal him.

Na′a-man asked the king to write to the king of Is′ra-el and tell him that he must cure him. The king of Is′ra-el did not know what to do. He said, "Am I God to kill and to make to live?" When E-li′sha heard of it he said,

"Let Na'a-man come now to me and he shall know that there is a man of God in Is'ra-el."

Na'a-man drove to the door of E-li'sha's house; he sent out word that the great man was to wash sev-en times in the Jor'dan and he should be clean. Na'a-man was filled with rage and went off. He said, "I thought he would be sure to come out to me and stand and call on the name of the Lord his God and strike his hand on the place and make me well. Are not the streams of Da-mas'cus as good as the Jor'dan? May I not wash in them and be clean?"

The men with him begged him to do as E-li'sha said; it was not a hard thing to do. At last Na'a-man went down and dipped sev-en times in Jor'dan and his flesh came like the flesh of a child

and he was clean. Then he knew that God was the true God and praised Him.

DAN'IEL

Dan'iel was the son of a prince of the tribe of Ju'dah. The king of Bab'y-lon had brought him back, with three of his boy friends, in one of his raids in the land of Is'ra-el. This king did not know our God. Dan'iel kept his faith and would not pray to strange gods.

He grew wise and the king found all he said was just and true. He loved him much, which made the men of his court hate Dan'iel, but as long as the king lived he was safe. When the king's son came to the throne Dan'iel's

foes made up their minds he should die. They could not find that he had done wrong, so they begged the king to make a law that no one should ask a thing of God or man for one month but from himself. If he did he should be cast in the den of li-ons.

When Dan′iel heard it he went in his house three times a day and knelt down and prayed to God, as he had been used to do. The king wished now that he had not made the law, but for his oath's sake he had to have Dan′iel thrown to the wild beasts. He knew Dan′iel was such a good man that he said to him, "Your God Whom you serve will save you."

When the sun rose the king got up and went in haste to the den. Dan′iel was safe. He said, "O king, my God

sent his an-gel and shut the li-ons' mouths, they have not hurt me, for I had done no wrong." Then was the king glad.

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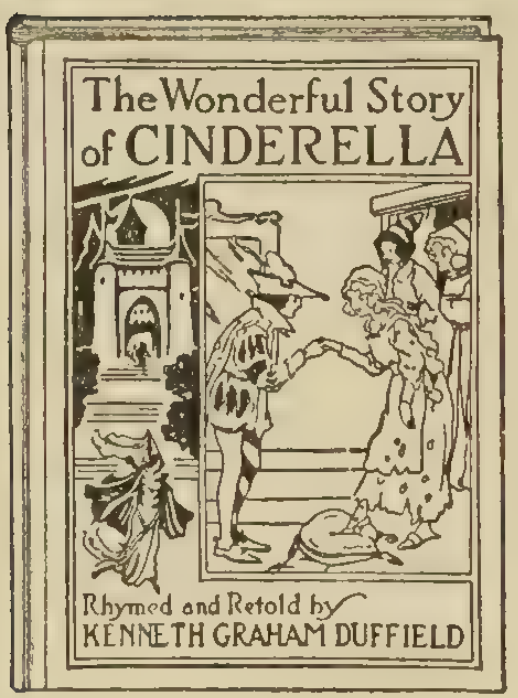

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